DOCUMENT RESUME

ED 349 189 SO 021 893

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TITLE	The I Have a Dream/Coro Summer Work Partnership Project: Pilot Training Program. Initial Assessment.
INSTITUTION	Coro Foundation, New York, NY.
PUB DATE	91
NOTE	36p.
AVAILABLE FROM	Coro Foundation, 95 Madison Avenue, New York, NY 10016.
PUB TYPE	Reports - Evaluative/Feasibility (142)
EDRS PRICE	MF01 Plus Postage. PC Not Available from EDRS.
DESCRIPTORS	Adolescent Development; *Disadvantaged Youth; Grade 10; High Schools; *Internship Programs; *Program Evaluation; Student Experience; Youth Employment; Youth Opportunities; *Youth Programs
IDENTIFIERS	Coro Foundation NY; I Have a Dream Program

ABSTRACT

In the summer of 1991, 24 students, members of an I Have a Dream (IHAD) program, took part in a pilot program to introduce them to the work force through internships augmented by a training program. The Coro Foundation was contacted by IHAD to run the training program, which was adapted to the needs of disadvantaged students entering 10th grade. This study focused on Coro's contribution to the pilot program. Over a 6-week period, the training included a week-long orientation followed by Friday seminars throughout July, and a final weekend retreat of approximately 12 days. This report analyzed the pilot program and curriculum, less as an evaluation than as an exploration of students' experiences and gains in knowledge, skills, and attitudes. A variety of instruments were used: questionnaires, interviews, observations, scrutiny of written work, and students' self-assessments. There was strong evidence that the students achieved considerable gains in knowledge, skills, and motivation. Students who had thought initially of businesses as owned by individuals or families adopted a whole new framework. They mastered vocabulary and concepts on the structures and roles of businesses. The majority of students cited significant gains in confidence in speaking in public and asking for information and help. Students' self-concepts improved dramatically. This assessment confirmed the value and timeliness of a training component for impoverished young people encountering institutional settings and job responsibilities for the first time. (Author/DB)

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The I Have A Dream/Coro Summer Work Partnership Project:

Pilot Training Program

Initial Assessment

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U.S. DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION
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Summer 1991

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"My question is: Are we making an impact?"

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

In the summer of 1991, 24 students, members of an I Have A Dream (IHAD) program, took part in a pilot program to introduce them to the work force through internships augmented by a training program. Coro was contracted by IHAD to run the training program adapted to disadvantaged students entering tenth grade.

This study focuses on Coro's contribution to the pilot program. Over a 6-week period, the training included a week-long orientation followed by Friday seminars throughout July, and a final Weekend Retreat, approximately 12 days. Business internships have long been a specialty of Coro training. Its distinctive approaches-- holistic, experiential, integrative, skills-oriented-- are well-adapted for adolescents, a relatively new target group for Coro. Though not much practiced in schools or work education programs, the effectiveness of these approaches for 14-16 year olds is well documented.

This report analyzes the pilot program and curriculum, less as an evaluation, more as an exploration of students' experiences and gains in knowledge, skills and attitudes. It is intended to be a source of suggestions for future Coro youth programs. The issues raised in this study apply not only to this program, but also to work education in general aimed at middle adolescents.

A variety of instruments was used: questionnaires, interviews, observation, scrutiny of written work, and students' self-assessments. The timeframe was brief, the group was small. The numbers of respondents varied according to attendance. The findings presented here derive from outcomes studied at the conclusion of the program; more follow-up is needed to determine the long-term effects on educational aspiration and performance.

Despite these limitations, there is strong evidence that the students achieved considerable gains in knowledge, skills and motivation.

- Students who had initially thought of businesses as owned by individuals or families (characteristic of their South Bronx neighborhood) adopted a whole new framework. They mastered vocabulary and concepts on the structures and roles of businesses. As seen in quizzes, games, and interviews, an estimated 80% can define and pose questions about public and private ownership, governance, stocks and bonds, the origins and evolution of businesses over time and, for a few, the environments and constraints.

- The majority of students' cited significant gains in confidence in speaking in public and asking for information and help. Through interviews and field inquiry, they researched and developed presentations on the "life stories" of businesses and executives. With their new concepts and the trainers' coaching, students conducted a total of 10-12 interviews individually and in teams.

- The accompanying changes in students' self-concepts are striking. Students rated themselves individually and with the trainers on changes they saw in themselves. Leading the 14+ items were notable gains in individuals' ability to communicate, manage time, make decisions, and to assert and lead. These gains are also captured in their writings and presentations.

This assessment confirms the value and timeliness of a training component for impoverished young people encountering institutional settings and job responsibilities for the first time. One imagines that students will bring increased interest and motivation to school in September. But it would be naive to minimize the discouragements and distractions they face out of school or in school, including the return to lock-step instruction, during what statistics show to be formidably "drop out prone" years.

A number of issues are to be considered in making a good youth program even better. Many of these center on balancing the students' acquisition of general knowledge and their personal needs, and on strengthening the links between training and learning at work.

- A strict focus was maintained on learning about business, roles and, to a lesser extent than is customary for Coro, the interrelationships with the community. This served to immerse students and to insure certain learnings, but topics of importance to the students were cut short, for example, racism and stereotyping. Other concerns voiced by students-- managing time and money-- were relegated to in-between moments. The feedback makes evident that students are working to make sense of their lives. For curriculum to be developmentally appropriate for this age group, students need more opportunities to put topics on the agenda.

- Refinement is also needed in the implementation of training activities to accommodate younger students' more active, less analytical learning styles. They strongly suggest shorter discussions, more breaks and more of the fun, interactive exercises. Livelier and more varied ways of incorporating analysis and reflection to be considered are: time-limited sharing exercises on topics of curiosity related to work, journal writing, values clarification exercises, and skill-oriented role-plays.

- The internship-training configuration is an issue for youth programs. Undoubtedly, students brought heightened interest to the training because they were entering an unfamiliar work situation. They wanted what training provided and what they might apply in their work settings: information, vocabulary, practice, tips, group sharing, problem-solving and self-esteem building. It is hard to envision training in a vacuum. Training and internship can and should be mutually reinforcing.

Dissonance can occur between training and internship. Different sponsors and administrators bring different philosophies and priorities to a collaboration and pose extra demands on information-sharing and coordination. Difficulties occur if students receive mixed messages about the importance of one component over another, if they receive pay or attendance awards for days of work but not training. But, whether the training is autonomous or inter-organizational, somehow support services should be provided for young participants when problems arise and follow-up for their special needs or interests, academic or emotional. In this program, one-third of the students opted out of the out-of-town Weekend Retreat, out of fear and uncertainty about its importance. Outreach is still needed with parents and guardians. Dialogue with job supervisors would provide a rich source for fine-tuning of training and strengthen students' application of new skills at work.

In summary, this study gives clear evidence that the training activities contributed substantially to the overall aim of introducing students to the world of work. Students' gains appear to be directly attributable to the nature of the training. Ultimately, Coro's unique contribution may be that the students have had that kind of learning experience in which a whole area of life is illuminated by concepts and words, and that the interpreting of experience is a gratifying and interconnected one.

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I. INTRODUCTION

The setting is mainstream corporate America. The image is compelling. A 14-15 year old intern in serious clothes is coding mail, answering phones, faxing documents. Maybe the intern takes time to skim correspondence. And to ask questions. The intern is African-American or Latino, applying junior high school-level skills to his assignments. And wondering about his future, "Where do I fit in?" What does this intern see? And learn? How is the intern changed?

This report is an assessment of a pilot program in New York City in the summer of 1991. Its aim was to introduce 24 students to the work force through a summer internship augmented by sequenced training activities. The 14 to 16 year old students were participants in the I Have A Dream program (IHAD). IHAD organized the job placements and contracted Coro to conduct the training. This study focuses on the orientation and training components which took place over a 6-week period, Coro's contribution to the pilot program. What follows is an initial assessment of the training at its conclusion.

AIMS

The content of internships cannot be ordained. Especially not summer internships for young people. Many on-the job factors make the difference between learning by doing and just doing and these vary greatly: work demands, supervision, opportunities for coaching and skill development, exposure to other parts of the company, and interaction with others.

Training is one component which can be controlled, responsive and accessible for individual and group reflection. Therefore, this assessment hinges on the questions: Did the organization and delivery of training activities contribute substantially to the overall objective of introducing students to the world of work and career opportunities? What kinds of training experiences are developmentally appropriate for disadvantaged 14 and 15 year olds encountering institutional settings and job responsibilities for the first time?

Recognizing the importance of these questions, the process of assessment here was established as an integral part of the curriculum development and tryout experience, in particular the final weekend retreat. This follows the dictum of Cronbach that "Evaluation used to improve the course while it is still fluid contributes more to the improvement of education than evaluation used to appraise a product already placed on the market." [1]

Insofar as possible, assessment should be used to understand how the training component produces its effects and what parameters influence its effectiveness. It was assumed, therefore, that the evaluation of Coro's part in the pilot program would result in the modifications and improvements in future youth training.

The importance of adopting objectives for the purposes of evaluation has long been recognized. When objectives are sharply defined and stated in operational terms, the measurement of the program under study is greatly enhanced. Accordingly, evaluation of the training elements was planned in light of the objectives of the program.

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[1] Cronbach, L.J. Teachers College Record, p. 673.

These objectives were:

1. to increase student knowledge about businesses and work roles, and to reveal interrelationships between businesses and communities (thereby adding to the student's general knowledge) to a greater extent than might be attained in a straightforward internship or traditional class;

2. to aid student acquisition of analytical and critical thinking skills and communication, specifically, interviewing, formulating questions, asking for help and information, clarifying job expectations, and contributing to group problem-solving and decision-making;

3. to produce increased student interest in career opportunities and identification with successful employees (thereby increasing the student's motivation to work in school and go to college); and

4. to improve effectiveness in training in conjunction with work experience for adolescents.

Assessment efforts for this program are based in the first training activities (discussions of goals and expectations, the Pre-Evaluation Survey) culminating in the weekend retreat at the conclusion of training. Instruments referred to in this report include: questionnaires, interviews, conferences, and group and individual "quizzes." Findings also draw on observation and assessment of key activities, student interviews, presentations, writing samples, and rap sessions, as well as trainers' written feedback for each day of activities.

This study has obvious limitations. It does not purport to shed light on long-term learnings, though this kind of learning experience is open-ended. At some later date, it will be worthwhile to evaluate the program's impact in terms of the students' retention of knowledge, skills, attitudes, self-esteem and goal orientation. The short time frame does permit these findings to be useful to the coordinator, job supervisor, and students while there is still time to address areas of concern.

In the sections that follow, this report addresses three primary questions:

1. What is the nature of the Coro training in this configuration and how is it perceived by the students?

2. What effects has the supplemental Coro training had on students' ability to learn from their work experiences and each other, in terms of knowledge, skills and attitudes?

3. What implications does this pilot program have for future youth programs involving internships and training?

BACKGROUND

There are 111 tuition-guarantee programs for disadvantaged youth in this country according to a recent U.S. government survey.[2] The IHAD group studied here is among at least 70 programs in which a class operates under the sponsorship of wealthy individuals. The only two mandatory components of the IHAD model are guaranteed college tuition and the project coordinator. This kind of program is new in the young annals of IHAD, not so much the use of internships, but the addition of a sophisticated training model.

The 24 students in this program, now entering 10th grade, have been together since 1987 when the entire fifth grade of a Bronx elementary school was adopted into the IHAD program-- 104 students, the largest ever-- by a husband and wife sponsor. Their enhancements far exceed IHAD models elsewhere. They include cultural and recreational outings, educational support, one-to-one mentoring with New York business and civic leaders, after-school and summer programs . Students visit the sponsors' city and country homes. On the drawing boards are writing classes, peer counseling, academic forums and monthly parent meetings.

This cohort enjoys these extras and more, such as this summer's work/training program. Each student is known to the sponsor by name. They meet weekly with Mrs. Sponsor. Their school programs them as a group in the same homeroom and classes.[3] Called Dreamers in IHAD lingo, these students have a basis in reality for dreaming about better futures, though most have difficulty conceiving of them. School and home circumstances do not appreciably change. Some deteriorate. The students have constant reminders, including from the sponsors, that "only one out of five Dreamers will make it."[4]

The Need

Good jobs demand of young people solid skills, analytical and communication ability, and knowledge of the nature and variety of work settings and the career paths within them. This set of needs was the impetus for engaging Coro in framing and enriching the Dreamers' internship experience.

The nature of work has changed in America today. There is a widening gap between the highest earning 30% of American families and the bottom 70% which has continually lost ground. Over the past 15 years, the earnings gap between white collar professionals and tradespeople has gone from 2% to 37%; the gap between professionals and clerical workers has gone from 47% to 86%. The poverty rate of African-American families is nearly three times that for Whites and the gap continues to widen.[5]

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2 National Center on Education and the Economy Workforce. America's Choice: High Shills or Low Wages, pp. 7-9.

3 Three students are exceptions: one in Special Education , one who attends school in Arizona and returns to NYC for the summer, and one high-achieving student enrolled at a different school.

4 This group is reminded by their sponsor that "Of 24 of you, only 5 will make it... well, maybe you, too, Sandy, I see how high your grades were last report card!"

5 National Center on Education and the Economy . America's Choice, pp. 19-20. See also Business Week, "Young Americans," August 19, 1991. Formal training and apprenticeships have long been in

Given the schools where they tend to be impoverished young people are surrounded with low expectations and, whether drop-outs and high school graduates, are most likely to end up in low paid, low skill jobs. The vast majority of young people who go directly from high school and to work are offered little or no help in the transition; only 8% of front-line workers receive formal training on the job. Lacking are foundation skills, technical training and the habits of mind for lifelong learning, i.e. learning how to learn and adapt.

Not only the socioeconomic status but also the age group of the students in this program signals risk. In New York City, nearly 12% of students drop out in the ninth and tenth grades; nearly 40% of those who enter ninth grade leave the school system without graduating. These figures are higher for African-American students, and higher still for Latinos.[6] High school graduates in other parts of the country have been found to constitute a more skilled and motivated work force than their counterparts here, a grim reality not lost on those New York City businesses which, bearing negative public opinion, have deemed it more productive to locate new divisions elsewhere.[7]

Limited opportunity, low challenge, low motivation, and low productivity have become a vicious cycle for large numbers of America's workers. The consequences go beyond the diminished hopes and circumstances of individuals and groups. The country is losing ground in a competitive global economy.

The Coro Training Model

Coro's method of training is through internships. For almost 50 years, it has helped to recruit, train and direct men and women from all segments of the community to assume leadership roles in the public and private sectors with emphasis on problem-solving on the job and in one's neighborhoods. Businesses are looked at in context with an appreciation for diversity and concern for the common good. Individuals are prepared to be effective in group settings and unfamiliar situations.

Coro participants achieve a kind of "political literacy" through the study of interrelationships between and among 6 sectors: business, labor, government agencies, community-based organizations, labor unions, media and politics itself. This model was trimmed and simplified for the IHAD interns.

Coro's work with this age group is relatively new, but its emphasis on active learning, inquiry and group interaction seems irrefutable for middle adolescence, cognitively, socially, and affectively. But what of the Coro model in terms of content, sequence, scope, and relevance to the internship and students' needs? Subsequent sections will address these issues.

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place for workers not bound for college. "Experts say that private industry sould be spending anywhere from 3% to 6% of payroll on training, compared with the 1.4% average that companies now spend." p. 128.

6 New York Times, April 3, 1991.

7 Private conversation with Bruce Carp, Vice Chairman, Salomon Brothers, Inc. on location of a new division, 750 positions, to Tampa, Florida, June 1991.

Summer Job Experience

The internships were developed by the well-connected sponsors through their professional and personal relationships in leading New York investment, legal, insurance, fashion and cultural institutions. Contact people in these settings were made aware that this would be the Dreamers' first time challenged with a formal work experience. The interns' earnings were set around $5 per hour, 4 days a week in July, and 5 days a week in August. They were placed in different organizations mainly in the corporate sector. A few of the placements reflect students' interests.

Summer work experience holds great possibilities for this population. But learning does not necessarily flow from experience. How is the intern best helped to examine his setting, try new behaviors, and learn from frustrations ? How can training enhance his ability to gain insight and transfer learning? The web of adults and linkages -- one IHAD coordinator, two Coro trainers, job supervisors (often more than one), the sponsors' contacts (kept anonymous)-- represented a challenge in the monitoring and "mining" of individual experiences. These are among the programmatic issues explored in Section II.

STUDENTS

Personal Profile

This group of Dreamers was selected for the summer project because this is the top group academically of the sponsors' 104 IHAD students. Their ages are 14-15 years old, 2 are 16, one is 17. These are grade-appropriate ages; no more than one or two have repeated a grade. (No information was made available on whether the student was performing at grade-level. Writing samples suggest that one-third of the students are 2 years below.)

The students are evenly divided by gender. Eighteen are African-American, 5 are Latino, 1 is both. All but three attend the same classes in the same school. There are no reports of suspensions. They live and attend school in a crime-ridden and severely disadvantaged neighborhood that looks and feels much more remote than its geographical or subway distance would indicate. (The major employer in the community, according to students' perceptions on the Pre-evaluation Survey, is Met Food supermarket.)

The two-parent family is a rarity. Nine students live with mothers, one with a father, three live with grandparent guardians, four live with a grandparent at this time, three are with male-female guardians. One student lives with both parents. Students speak of families which have high hopes for them, of standards which range from the strict, the highly religious, to the lax, as well as of siblings who are parents too soon and of parents with substance abuse problems.

Of the blessing (sometimes mixed) of being a Dreamer or a summer intern, there is as yet scant anecdotal information about families' and friends' reactions. Further study would be useful on the implications of grouping Dreamers as a class throughout their schooling. With 80 other Dreamers to relate to, it is likely that some of the envy or sense of singularity is muted. this has been a difficult element for other Dreamers. As might be expected, the bond is palpable among these students; they are mindful of each other's progress, foibles and changes-- or lack of them.

Work Profile

Nearly two-thirds of the Dreamers have worked for pay locally: clerical (2); maintenance (2); painting, cashier, baby-sitting, catering, survey company, flower shop, and summer youth work and others (from Pre-Evaluation Survey). One student continued to also work in his part-time job which incorporates his interests and career plans, sound electronics.

Attendance and punctuality are not problems for the majority of Dreamers in their internships or in the training program, though "getting to the job on time" and "waking up early" were frequently cited sources of anxiety and discomfort. Two-thirds of the students attended all training sessions. One-third missed a few. Three students missed sizeable portions of training. It should be noted, however, that only 16 of 24 Dreamers attended the final Weekend Retreat. The implications for evaluation and programmatic changes will be discussed in later sections.

In questions on goals and expectations about the summer, over 50% of the group consistently mentioned learning about business, getting experience, learning about job expectations, responsibilities, and hard work. Three students consistently mentioned making money. The students' curiosity about business may be attributable to the emphasis put on learning about business which accompanied the summer orientation. It should also be noted that, in the summer of 1991, students have begun trying to make sense of the worlds beyond their neighborhoods through IHAD and personal excursions. Their neighborhoods contain a limited number of stores, bodegas, and small businesses. "Downtown" is known to have more interesting stores, chains and inhospitable store personnel and security guards. Further downtown is business. These issues-- relating adolescent development, race and money consciousness, and elements of the training program-- will be discussed further in the sections that follow.

Additional information from the Pre-Evaluation Survey:

Question What kinds of jobs do the people in your community do?
Responses

Sell drugs (4), work in supermarkets (2), maintenance (2), sanitation (2), hospital work (2), work in businesses/offices (2). 1 response each: department stores, anything, secretarial, factory, teaching, pizza shop, pack bags, own business, work in TV store, train, no job, cashier, sales, bank, don't know.

Question What kinds of jobs are you interested in doing when you are no longer a student?
Responses

Computer programming (4), law (3), accounting (2), hospital work (2). 1 response each: management, child care, fashion, nuclear rocket science, construction, corporations, sound system installation, work with problem child, architect, author/writer.

Question What preparation will you need for these jobs?
Responses

College (3), law school (3), math skills (3), education (2), computer programming (2), science skills (2), writing skills (2), 1 response each: writing skills, listening skills, experience, art skills, hard work, determination.

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II. CORO TRAINING COMPONENT

The stated goal of the Summer Work Project was "to prepare Dreamers to utilize their work experience to realize their fullest potential." The aim of the training, concentrated in the first half of the summer, was to augment the students' first work experiences. As described, Coro training emphasizes leadership, critical thinking and inquiry skills, active group problem-solving, and learning by experience.

This section focuses on the main elements and activities of the training, the students' experiences of the program and the staff, and the relation of training and internship. Here and elsewhere in this report, students' own words (and grammar) will be used wherever their comments are presented. Section III will report on what students learned: knowledge, skills, attitudes.

PROGRAM ELEMENTS

Several aspects distinctive to Coro training are well-adapted for adolescent interns though a relatively new target group for Coro. The effectiveness of holistic, hands-on and group approaches for 14-16 year olds is well documented in the literature for this age group, notwithstanding the scarcity of these approaches in the majority of schools. [8]

Conventional school and career education programs have had disappointing results with business education and job readiness training.[9] This is not surprising if one considers what it would take to make a didactic lesson, say "Fundamentals of Business," interesting to students from impoverished surroundings with few mental pictures of business.

Whole group instruction misses the mark with 13 and 14 year olds who, due to maturational changes, show large variations in cognitive levels, such as concrete-abstract thinking, as well as identification with adults vs. peers. "Job Readiness" coaching is premature for students below 11th grade; how-to's on dress and interviewing have been found limited and limiting except under certain circumstances.[10] In general, much career education has been criticized as short-sighted, non-motivating, social control-oriented rather than empowering, dissociated from the real world, individualistic, and so on.

What makes Coro training different? In this model, the learner is conceived as proactive and empowered-- an investigator, if not change agent. Students explore multiple perspectives of looking at the world of work-- though not the full six sectors mentioned earlier-- and apply these to carrying out their internship assignments and to examining their work settings.

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8 Lipsitz, J. Successful Schools for Young Adolescents.

9 Grubb, W.N. and Lazerson, M. Harvard Educational Review, pp. 183-206.

10 Simon, Learning Work. 1991.

Table 1 below compares traditional approaches and Coro.[11] Table 2 on the following page summarizes the elements and activities which exemplify the Coro approaches in the pilot training program, summer of 1991.

TABLE 1: WHAT MAKES CORO TRAINING "DIFFERENT"/"

Objectives	Traditional education or job readiness approach	Coro Approaches
Realms of learning	teacher-centered: lessons	learner-centered: via activities, situations
1. knowledge: to increase student knowledge about businesses and work roles, and to reveal interrelationships between businesses and communities	didactic: lectures, workbooks guest talks with Q and A compartmentalized	inquiry training Guest experts interviewed by small groups integrative: History politics, economics, marketing, social factors. used to understand business context.
2. skills: to aid acquisition of critical thinking, interviewing, formulating questions, asking for help and information, clarifying job expectations, and contributing to group problem-solving and decision-making;	"read & identify main point" how-to role-plays (maybe) project-based (maybe) individualized (maybe)	experiential, i.e. learning by doing. cooperative learning group process team-oriented problem-solving activities
3. attitudes: increased student interest;	pep talk/sermon	values clarification
identification with successful employees;	"Career Development Day"	mentors, role-models, tours
motivation to work in school or go to college	Vocational Ed /college advisor	holistic: Reflection on group and individual experiences

[11] These characterizations of Coro approaches are drawn from the literature on curriculum and pedagogy of the last 25 years, for example, Eisner, Phenix, Apple, and educators inspired by Dewey.

TABLE 2: PROGRAM ELEMENTS OF CORO TRAINING & OVERVIEW OF ACTIVITIES

Orientation: Logic Study (June 28-29)
Orientation to Coro methodology, basic research ("Logic Study"), reporting information, team building skills, and exploring expectations.

Activities: (1) In the Logic Study, students explored a Bronx neighborhood to determine what businesses are there and why, how they work, and their relationship to the community. The goal was for students to learn how to gather, analyze and draw inferences about their findings and to do a presentation to the group. Students were introduced to the notions of structure and function in business and need for interviewing skills to discover them. (2) Group skills involved delegating roles, brainstorming, sharing information and and hunches. (3) Attitudes that were emphasized were dealing with the unknown (people, places), learning by doing, relying on insuncts and taking responsibility for learning.

Pre-Employment Workshops (July 1, 2,3 and 5)
Introduction to different types of businesses and the corporate office through interviews and tours.

Activities: (1) Business philosophy and structure, profits, employment, competition, taxes, community relations were concepts introduced students in order to (2) develop team interviews, with trainers' help, to elicit basic information, pose "who, what, when..." questions and follow-up questions. (3) to reflect on areas of assumptions, need for information, questioning strategy, and evaluation and organization of information. (4) Through personal goal-setting and skits, students identified standards of conduct in attitude and dress, and explored assumptions about the business world, fantasies and interests. (5) Organizational model for analyzing organizations, i.e. "Load, Design, Working Parts, Fuel."

Interviews (July week and ongoing)
Ongoing "curriculum" to eventually total of 10-13 interviews per student.

Activities: (1) Four different groups of students interviewed 2-3 people per day for 3 days. (2) Interviews were summarizes and reacted to in writing. (3) Interviews presented by and to groups. (4) Subsequent seminars, students interviewed 3 more people (not counting sponsor interview): · e.g. Stock exchange, small business owner, and Coro fellow.

Friday Seminars (July 12, 19, 26)
Weekly group meetings where students share with each other their individual business assignments, responsibilities at work, and management styles they have witnessed.

Activities: (1) public speaking exercises, (2) building consensus exercises (2) reflections on learning processes in Coro, school , on the job and one's preferred style. (3) Business philosophy and social responsibility explored through a Fortune magazine article and writing assignment. (4) Interviewing skills, group problem-solving situations were worked on with skits.

Weekend Retreat (August 2-4)
Conclusion of Coro training component at a retreat center in upstate New York.

Activities: (1) Group problem-solving, decision-making, and leadership skills, e.g. Lost on the Moon exercise. (2) Further work on group cohesion and values clarification, e.g. Significant Object exercise, "New Games" e.g. Human Circle trust exercise, basketball game. (3) Exploration of careers and goals.
(4) Personal conferences and roundtable discussions of learnings on work, training, group and self.
(5) Conceptual framework and self-reflection on how people process information., ("Semantic transformer")
(6) Analysis and applications to the school and to work.

I Have A Dream/Coro Summer Work Program, Summer 1991

STUDENTS' COMMENTS ON THEIR EXPERIENCES

This section presents students' written answers to questionnaires at the end of training. Their comments reveal an awareness of the different type of learning intrinsic in the Coro model . Their comments most often reflect the active, learner-centered, inquiry-based approaches.

> The experience that stands out for me is the way Coro taught us how to ask intelligent questions. I expected Coro to be more like school. I thought they would be more like teachers. They weren't. They made us use the knowledge we didn't know we had. I thought they were going to teach us but they didn't. They made us figure the tasks out ourselfs.

A. What stands out most about the Coro training? and What was the highpoint ?

(responses grouped according to similarities in the order of frequency of mention and in students' own written words)

public speaking
-- being able to speak out in front of my peers freely and openly
-- expressing myself more was the best thing that happened to me
-- the highpoint was when I had to speak out loud in front of the Dreamers and the Dreamer parents

interviews
-- interviews with different types of business
-- not to be afraid to ask questions
-- interview and presentations
-- getting practice

interactive exercises
-- finding a solution to the problem
-- It wasn't boring
-- fun outdoor exercises (see following two items)
-- Making a square together blind-folded, a group project
-- Significant Object exercise brought by individuals from home for sharing
-- Human Circle exercise (a trust fall)
-- Lost on the Moon exercise on consensual decision-making
-- small groups
-- time with Robin/Vivian (personal conferences and informal)
-- being able to trust people

unexpected learnings
-- I surprised myself by walking in the dark alone. (Retreat)
-- All the people we interviewed: men wore suits, women wore dresses and heels.
-- to learn now to stop yelling and talking out of turn and when I walked through the hall by myself. (Retreat)

Students wrote repeatedly about gaining confidence in verbal skills. The Coro emphasis on interviewing and inquiry techniques was undoubtedly a source for some of this confidence; students gained vocabulary and practice through demonstrations with and for each other in groups of varying sizes. Boys were more likely to mention interviews specifically.

Nearly all boys and girls wrote about the sense of developing or exercising one's own voice among others. It is the most frequent comment by the students on all the questionnaires:

B What would you say is the biggest change you've seen in yourself so far as a result of the Coro training? and What is something about yourself that is new and good?

-- I'm more confident in myself
-- I listen a little bit better and I'm a little nicer
-- I'm a good person. I have good suggestions sometimes towards actions. I'm a positive person who can create a new "atmosphere."
-- Speaking in front of people
-- my leadership skills
-- getting over my fear of speaking up
-- Outspoken. I wasn't that talkative at first but now I say whatever I feel . Good or Bad.
-- willing to work harder
-- that I would like to help people in need
-- my effort and skill I never knew I had
-- the dressing and the listening
-- That I come up with answers I thought I didn't know.
-- I ask more questions
-- I'm much more responsible and aggressive towards my work
-- Knowing that I can do the work and have a positive attitude.
-- expressing my feelings

C. Have your attitudes toward school (or view of courses) changed? If so, how?

-- It takes a good education to make it.
-- This program makes me want to learn more but I won't lit it show.
-- The Coro program has help see my goals more clear. (lawyer-doctor). I know what I want to do and I know what it takes to get there!
-- Now I want to work harder.
-- I gained a lot of power and experience and its important.
-- It will help me to participate more in school
-- being open in discussions

D. What plans for the future did you make or think about this weekend?
(Weekend Reaction Sheet)

--- work harder and try to be 100% responsible towards my action
-- In what ever I do, be the best at it.
-- To start my own business and help minoritys.
-- to learn more new things about each other.

E. Have your ambitions or expectations about future careers changed?

-- No. (65% of respondents)
-- As a young child I wanted to be an artist or a basketball player. Now I am interested also in business and industry.
-- I thought working was going to be boring. But I found out it could be fun if you make it fun
-- I see now that it is very hard to work in the big businesses in Manhattan. It is no easier to be a supervisor than a president.
-- My goals stayed the same. I still want to go into business and give back to the community

Students' Ratings and Recommendations

Nearly 40% of the students expressed the desire for more varied and interactive activities and more time on topics that capture group interest. They were ask to rank each component of the program "in terms of its usefulnesss to you in working and learning this summer." Their ratings of the different components follow in Table 3.

TABLE 3: STUDENT RATINGS OF PROGRAM ELEMENTS

1- not at all useful 2- a little useful 3- useful 4-very useful

Program elements	1	2	3	4	
	number of students who assigned each rating				
Pre-employment Workshops	3	8	4	2	
Logic Study (Southern Blvd.)	7	7	0	1	(see note)
Interviews	0	7	4	5	
Friday Seminars	0	8	6	2	
Weekend Retreat	0	3	3	10	

Notes: Based on 16 respondents who attended the Retreat. Students did not respond if they were absent from an event. The Logic Study was conducted during a day of record heat on the streets of the Bronx with students, as instructed, wearing their best work clothes.

What changes would make the experience more useful to future Dreamers?

-- more understanding of when we didn't understand the activities fully
-- less analyzing, relate to the kids, have more exercises
-- more activities that are active not just sitting around
-- not such long classes
-- more free time to get to know people like R. and V. (the trainers)
-- more fun would inspire us to learn more
-- put in breaks between activities
-- more group projects but shorter
-- more time on the Retreat and more talk about business in the community
-- a less scary house with less stairs (Seminary retreat center)

Students were asked what it was like to go through Coro training as a group. Many replied specifically about being an IHAD cohort together for 4 years. Most but not all appreciated the team-building aspects of training added to their cohesiveness and familiarity.

-- I speak more open because I know these people
-- It made a difference. I feel more comfortable.
-- We are closer.
-- A lot of people would like to meet new people.
-- It made it easier.
-- You think the Dreamers would of changed there personality But they are still the same kids they were in the 5th grade.
-- When we brought something along that meant something to us, I learned something new about everybody. (Significant Object exercise).

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Adolescent Trainees: Vignettes and Considerations

Students' perceptions and experiences speak volumes about effectiveness, authenticity, timing, and balance in a curriculum. The following vignettes are offered as samples of the richness and complexity to be considered with this population.

Vignette 1: Teacher-centered vs. learner-centered curriculum and the topics of racism, economics and stereotyping

The trainers assigned an article on the the inner-city's untapped business opportunities and resources (Fortune magazine). Reading had not been required before, and most students did not do it. The trainers took a stand: the topic was important. Students were to write answers on specific points. The discussion would take place. When it did, it opened a floodgate of interest. The trainers reluctantly ended this discussion to return to the packed agenda. The students' frustration resurfaced in personal conferences. They spoke of "not pursuing kids' interest more" and "keeping too tight a rein." The issues students raised, paraphrased in the trainers' note, are offered here:

-- If major corporations owned by white people came into the ghettos, would they share the ownership and the profits? How should they?
-- If it's okay for people to own their own businesses, what is reasonable to ask of owners in giving to others?
-- Are special programs to help minorities okay? Shouldn't people do for themselves?
-- Why are goods sold in the inner-city inferior and more expensive?
-- Why do non-white teens have to commute to buy things and then get treated suspiciously even though their money's as good as anyone elses's?
-- Just because people are white and have money doesn't mean they're prejudiced against people who aren't. How can you tell if they're good?
-- What's the difference between making a negative generalization about a group vs. prejudice and stereotyping?

Vignette 2: Affirmative Action

With awareness of their newly acquired interviewing and listening skills, students met with their father-figure sponsor and, among other things, questioned him on Affirmative Action. He said, "It's when there are empty job slots and you give them to Blacks and Hispanics even if they don't deserve them." Trainers refrained from challenging this definition on the spot, but later posed it on the final group quiz. Each of the 3 teams offered the sponsor's answer verbatim in the attempt to answer correctly and gain points. The trainers gave them all 0's for their replies and stated a non-subjective, legal definition of Affirmative Action.

Vignette 3: An exercise that bombed

Little "failures" have much to teach. The Chair Exercise was unanimously disliked as an experience. Derived from a theatre game on perceptual differences, it involves participants in projecting or attributing traits onto a chair on a table in a room and interacting with it. The conceptual leap was well within this age group's grasp, but students found the experience arbitrary and demeaning. There are more concrete, applicable variations-- comparing inferences about the contents of a mysterious object, a staged event or mini-conflict. The guideline would be to play on students' curiosity and bypass adolescent performance anxiety while delivering the same learning.

In sum, students' pleasure and pride in being pushed is to be heeded as well as their discomfort with certain forums of learning and risk-taking. When the rationale is clear, students see the connections to their own lives and their own perceptions of what they need. (See also Delpit on the preference for skills-oriented pedagogy in educating African-American youth.)

In general, open-ended discussion is less reliably effective with adolescents than adults except when students are filled with the need to pool observations and interpret their surroundings. Authorization of trainers and students to go where the learning takes them may be perilous with pilot programs or less experienced staff, but unless one supports student initiatives, curriculum is reduced to cookbook approaches. Structured exercises and academic devices (like the Fortune magazine article) are useful ways to explore keenly felt issues like race politics and economics; these might otherwise be conflictual -- unconsciously experienced as disloyal or volatile-- in relation to white benefactors.

Later sections will present recommendations on adding content related to critical thinking on prejudice and racism, and also on how to achieve the goals of analysis and reflection through more discrete, varied and interactive formats.

STAFFING

Good staffing is essential in any program, but in a youth program the element of role-modeling is a powerful added dimension. Coro trainers were especially highly regarded by the students as the ratings which follow show, given their short-term acquaintance and distance from the real world internship experience, weekly pay, and so on.

TABLE 4: STUDENT RATINGS OF PROGRAM ELEMENTS

Staff person	no real contact	sometimes helpful	often helpful	very helpful!
V., Coro trainer	0	4	7	4
R., Coro trainer	0	3	5	7
IHAD Project Cdtr.	0	5	3	7
IHAD Admin. Ass't	2	6	1	5
supervisor at my workplace	2	3	4	4

Numbers of student responses when asked "to rate the staff members here in terms of their helpfulness to you in working and learning this summer. Circle the number that fits best." (16 respondents)

Students' comments reflect the effects of how trainers carried out their roles in this training model. In order of frequency of mention:

-- "They helped me speak up," "overcome my shyness" and "ask good questions"
(training, coaching, nurturing role of trainers)

-- "They were kind, treated me with respect like an adult. They only get loud when the Dreamers were out of hand." "Didn't talk down." "They had an agenda but changed things for us."
(distinct from the more authoritarian role of school teacher)

-- "They pushed us" and "They made us figure things out for ourselves." One student wrote: "They should treat the Dreamers like friends."
(distinct from counseling, social, rule-enforcing role of project coordinator)

Adult are a powerful source of inspiration and comfort to young and middle adolescents. Relationships between trainers and students flourished in the informal times together--walking to and from activities and events-- and during the Weekend Retreat. Much informal teaching and counseling went on. It was observed by the evaluator at the Retreat, that students looked forward to their 20- minute conferences with the trainers, and were willing to forego some lunch and break time. Several requested extra time to meet one-on-one with trainers to talk about their lives. There was admiration for the female trainer who was good at basketball! One trainer queried whether, for these reasons, the Retreat should have occurred earlier in the program.

Not just professionally, but also personally, these trainers were interesting, accessible adults. As females, they provided a complement to the Latino male project director. The Coro trainers were Latino and African-American, attuned to business, political and leadership issues, both anticipating law school as their own next experiences.

Students were asked "Is there anything else you would like to comment on or suggest about staff members' roles in helping you learn and work?" Four students suggested about continuing this work with other young people, 2 asked for continued training in the future. They volunteered:

I want to say that I really enjoy this program. The Reason is I got to know the Coro staff better.

They have taught me about business and taught me how to interact with people and how to think about how my decisions will help and hurt other people.

The Relation Between Training and Internship

The training and work experiences are by nature complementary and mutually reinforcing. But in this program, training and internships were set up and conducted as separate and autonomous programs. Discontinuities between the two, though not readily apparent, diluted some of the potential for student learning and at times undermined the authority of the staff.

One symptom was absenteeism. Though the earlier training events received good notices from students, approximately half missed one or more of the 12 days of training; one-third of the group missed the Weekend Retreat. The evidence suggests that some of the absenteeism was symptomatic of weak programmatic and educational links between the training and work experiences, in effect, mixed messages about the value of training.

For example:

-- Students did not compete, choose or contract to be in this program. Students seemed not to have been given any criteria about what would constitute successful completion for the summer work-training experience. It is unclear what their expectations about training were prior to or upon entry into the experience.

-- There were major incentives and these emphasized the work aspect: daily pay for 4 days of work in July; Day 5 was training day. In August, students were scheduled and paid for a 5-day work week. It was as if training were a thing apart. Perhaps to offset this, the coordinator had announced in early July, "If you don't go to Friday seminars, you won't be allowed to work." Not so with the weekend retreat.

-- Job supervisors had no contact with or knowledge about the training component and were therefore in no position to reinforce its importance or teachings or to draw on its potential support.

-- Parents were not invited to take part in other program elements (orientation, interviewing, neighborhood study, graduation) and were not made aware of the rationale for an out-of-town retreat. Travel outside the community should not be taken for granted for students of this age or from the inner city. Introduction to unfamiliar environments is a valuable adjunct to the program. But success depends on concerted effort among staff, coordinators and parents.

SUMMARY

The best educational experiences for adolescents strike a balance between challenge, fun, risk-taking and emotional safety. The majority of Coro experiences contained these elements. Some activities were hard work but students perceived their practical value for work, school, and peer relations. Statements to this effect tended to be made by students with excellent records in attendance and participation. Their "best" gains--interviewing, confidence in public speaking and group decision-making-- are directly and concretely related to those spheres. Some of the activities were fun and "seduced" students into learning in areas they initially resisted, e.g. receiving feedback on group skills, having a discussion on a magazine article turn into a sharing of issues and personal experiences, and discovering something new about other group members about whom they thought they knew everything.

With a few adjustments in curriculum content and livelier design, the power, appropriateness and student satisfaction in this pilot model will be even further enhanced. Expanded time would permit more breadth and depth of the sort found in standard Coro training (the six sectors of business, politics, government, media, etc.) and would enable students more application and reflection time throughout the second half of the internship.

Greater attention to linkages between the training and work experiences would most likely result in even greater relevance and improved attendance. Collaboration between trainers and supervisors-- with additional reinforcement of learning, feedback to students and attention to their needs and interests-- would open up more learning opportunities. Specific recommendations in these areas are summarized in the conclusion.

III. WHAT THE STUDENTS LEARNED

It is a paradox of formal education that some of its most important outcomes are postulated as attitudes, values, feelings and appreciations. Yet, the most prevalent means of appraisal are sought in the student's ability to master certain kinds of information or techniques. In this study, a variety of instruments was used, many of them open-ended. One valuable perspective is not used, the passage of time.

The data strongly indicates that supplemental Coro training has had a substantial impact on students' ability to absorb new information and to learn new skills. In this section, students' own voices are preserved among the findings described here.

KNOWLEDGE

This was known to be the students' first exposure to the businesses concepts presented in the training curriculum.[13] They were entering corporate settings and work roles for the first time and on equal footing, and were "primed" for an intellectual growth spurt.

TABLE 5: ASSESSMENT OF BUSINESS KNOWLEDGE

Assignments revealing growth over time	Results
Interview and role analysis write-ups (3 in all)	Varying degrees of writing skills, logic, detail. (Appendix: Pfizer, Reliance samples)
Presentations: Logic Study, Interviews	Excellent. Not all students. Variations due to small group help, trainer coaching.
Instruments or Tasks	**Results**
Final Quiz on work roles/responsibilities (10 questions)	14 respondents got all 100%, 1 got 80%. 1 special education 40% .
Final Quiz on composing 3 business questions	A grade- 70% of students B-20%, C-10% .
Final test in small groups on defining key business concepts (quiz show format)	All teams got right answers for at least 17 of the 20 questions
	(See Appendix)

Upon completion of the training, students wrote responses to questions such as "State 5 things you learned or observed about business that you did not know before the summer." Their observations range widely among roles, behavior and "demographics" in the corporate setting, and application of new concepts to the differentiation of departments, mastering technology, and hypotheses or insights relevant to plans and dreams.

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12 Vocabulary from tests and quizzes: types of businesses, board director vs director, stocks, bonds and dividends, the NY Stock Exchange, the Community Reinvestment Act, which department hires and fires employees, corporate law vs civil law, affirmative actions, 3 things needed to start a business, management vs. non-management positions, commercial vs. investment bank, tax abatement, worth of Reliance stock, Pfizer products. See also Role Quiz in Appendix.

TABLE 6: STUDENTS' RESPONSES ON WHAT THEY LEARNED ABOUT BUSINESS

(in students' own words)

Don't never have nothing to do.
If you can't find a file talk to the attorny or your superviser.
Everyone worked as a team (observed)
If you treat them with respect they will treat you with respect
If you are overbooked with work someone will help you (observed)

How to fax letters to other people
How to place the mail by code to other departments
I learned how to answer the phone like a professional
I also learned to file papers by state, date, etc.

The positions in depth
How the boss makes important decisions that really affect the company
How every person's job is important

There are many parts of the business that many people don't know about
As a law firm, JHC & B hires more non-lawyers than lawyers
Everyone must have college degrees and a good education
The bosses/partners get everything paid for the company even personal things

A lot of women work at my job site
People are not always nice or funny
I learned about stocks and how you get to buy them
Many people didn't want to work in what they are working in.

All a lot of big business lease their property
Most black people work in the stock room
Minorities have to work harder to get higher jobs in a business

How many different departments are there
I learned what most of the departments do
I learned how to deal with people in a professional manor.
I also learn that businesses have many locations over seas.
I learned that there's not too many minoritys in big companies.

How stocks work
mostly women work in my department
how to use a Quotron
How to read number reports on companies
Who made the decisions in the business

Business can either be private or public
Your business must have a high value to be in the stock exchange
Make businesses work for the people

How the structure is set up
What are the board of directors
How the company functions
Being a profitable company
The founder

On every floor, mostly everything evolves around one person.
What particular departments are there and how are they ran.

(continued next page)

(Table 6 continued)

Owning a fashion business is hard work.
Working is the design room is lots of work
Working in the production part of Breckenridge is hard work also
Now I learn that I am just not up to all of that work.

More than one person can own the business
It's a lot of hard work needed in the business
The people are very friendly, nice and clean.

Everyone helps each other instead of just doing one project yourself
To make something successful you must share each others' knowledge
If you don't understand what you are doing ask someone who knows
Your fellow workers are there to be your friend, not to discriminate you

---

Students responded to questions intended to examine their ability to ask questions. There was minimal variation in their answers to the following:

<u>If you met a business person and wanted to learn what he or she does, what questions would you ask if you could only ask 3 questions?</u>

what kind of education is needed?
what kind of business is it?
what are the qulifaying needs for your position?

How did you get into the business?
How long have you been in the business?

Where do you work?
What's your position?
What do you do?
What is your job department?

What can you contribute to make the company 100% perfect ? (1 student)

<u>What aspects of neighborhood or community life would you look at if you wanted to figure out the role of business and how it fit into the surrounding community?</u>

What types of products are sold
What price do they go for
In what quantity are they shipped
The people who own the business, what are their attitudes toward the community and customers

Profits, customers, how much money did it take to get started

I would first do a study on the people in the community and see what sells the most.
I would also like to see what type of people live there.

Elsewhere students wrote "4 adjectives to describe your work experience." Most included "fun, interesting and hardworking." The majority were: "fun, friendly, beneficial, encouraging,useful, interesting, 100%, enjoyable, skillful, rewarding, enlightening, exciting, challenging, busy." One wrote: "exousting, great , boring , confusing." Another: "cool, fun, hard and good looking."

SKILLS

Coro training is structured to provide many opportunities for students to learn, teach each other and receive coaching from trainers in analytical and critical thinking skills and communication. These activities are both a means and end of the training. Students were almost continuously engaged in:

- interviewing people in business, specifically, formulating initial and follow-up questions using concepts related to corporate, commercial and, to a lesser extent, community and government contexts.

- asking for help and information and contributing to group problem-solving and decision-making, highlighted in inquiry-oriented group projects.

- job-related "skills" such as clarifying job expectations, managing time, listening, via discussion related to training and other settings.

Students gave themselves before-and-after scores in skill areas and discussed the changes and their perceptions with trainers in private conferences. In the group as a whole, the biggest gains in skills are in knowledge of business and asking interview questions as perceived by students and trainers. (Table 7, page 21) The gains in "communicating well" and "asserting and leading" are borne out in the recurrent statements elsewhere of overcoming shyness and gaining confidence in speaking to groups.

Interpretation of this data also drew on trainers' observations and notes especially in social-interpersonal areas. For example, one girl gave herself a minus score in "keeping a good frame of mind." An only child, she was accustomed to being alone, reading, and avoiding conflict. As she felt herself engaging more, she disagreed more; she reported feeling unsettled by the experience. For most students, control of temper seemed to be an either -or. Students began the program feeling skilled at this, or they felt their emotional patterns unchanged, except for one boy and one girl. Similarly, gains were low for "getting along with others." Many had started with "moderately skilled." All but 4 students saw no changes in themselves. One advanced herself 2 points; the trainer concurred that this shy student had become an active contributor in group tasks. In the area of "dressing suitably, " gains were insignificant for both boys and girls who, except for 4 students, had rated themselves as moderately or very skilled to be begin with.

Gender became a factor in patterns of response most discernibly in "asserting and leading." Boys One sees considerable growth among the boys. They had given themselves low scores in the beginning, except for one who began with "very skilled." The gain in asserting and leading corroborates with the boys' gains in scores in interviewing and with trainers' perceptions that the boys especially took up interviewing with energy and assertiveness. Boys also reported significant gains in managing time and in asking for help, in contrast to the girls who started with initial high ratings.

Girls Two-thirds of the girls rated themselves as weak in asserting and leading with little change. (One-third of the girls began with "very skilled.") Compared to the boys, the pull-back from assertive behavior in girls of this age has been identified by psychologists such as Carol Gilligan. Trainers reported working hard to coach girls who ultimately did show real leadership in group problem-solving, less so in interviewing. (Perhaps this was an arena of competition involving the boys.) The implications for assessing the training program would be to examine the representation of females among executive-interviewees. Was business perceived as a man's world?

TABLE 7: SKILLS IN COMMUNICATION AND INTERACTION ACQUIRED THROUGH TRAINING

Rate the student/yourself according to skills at the beginning and changes you observed by the end of the program:

1- not observable 2- not skilled 3- moderately skilled 4-very skilled

("Very skilled" and other levels are so defined as within the norm of the group.)

Skills	+ gains for males (8)	+ gains for females (8)	Total
knowledge of business	22	20	42
communicating well	15	11	26
listening to & remembering instructions	7	8	15
managing time	14	7	21
paying attention	8	10	18
dressing suitably	1	3	4
asking interview questions (applying ideas to situations)	19	13	32
asking follow-up questions	13.5	9	22.5
asking for help	10	4	14
solving problems *	2.5	5	7.5
making decisions	12	7	19
keeping a good frame of mind (control of temper)	4	3	7
getting along with others	1	3	4
asserting & leading	13	4	17

Explanation: This score measures gains. Students were asked to rate themselves before the program on a scale of 1 to 4 and at the completion of training, 1 to 4. Trainers rated each student independently. In personal conferences, the trainer-student pair used this exercise to discuss skills, areas to work on and to agree on scores. Both trainers found that their ratings usually agreed with the students' own perceptions. Absent students Trainers on their own rated 5 students who were absent from the Retreat, but not 3 chronic absentees of whom they felt they had insufficient observation. (Total: 21)

* Interpreted by students as solving personal problems.

In terms of gender differences, the gains in self-expression and self-confidence-- the most dramatic of the program-- seem to have been experienced by boys and girls along different continua. It may be that the boys were attracted to interviewing as an active game-like activity; they drew strength as leaders as they mastered the technique. Girls incorporated interviewing as a "people" skill: paying attention, maintaining good relationships, and helping decision-making.

All students were aware of the comparably more difficult art of asking a good follow-up questions and rated themselves according. One could argue that there is critical thinking evident in that one difference alone.

Why was interviewing so readily received and valued by the students? One can only infer that the acquisition of tips, vocabulary and verbal practice in real situations constitutes a credible, dynamic and visible way for students to gain mastery and independence in talking to adults and to use in intimidating situations. There is no data about the percentage of students who ask questions of their supervisors. But in this curriculum, interviewing is an sociable, accessible and respected tool. Interviewing received proportionately more training time and follow-up than other curricular areas except perhaps group interaction and projects. The success indicated in these and other feedback instruments bear out the importance given it by the training.

ATTITUDES

Attitudes toward the self, career opportunity, teamwork, school and, to a lesser extent, race relations were all touched on in the program or in the assessment activities, even if not explicitly stated in the curriculum. Can short-term "educational" interventions like this summer work training program realistically be expected to change attitudes or values so that they really condition the students' later behaviors?

The hope is that students will see the value of goals and hard work and that, at some later date, they will turn off televisions, brush aside distracting or disreputable friends, and crack the books in pursuit of the American Dream. But complex realities did not escape these students. They also saw the disproportion of non-white faces in the stockroom, boredom and tiredness among employees, and the social, competitive and interdependent aspects of the workplace which, like school, can be fun or painful. Most students recognize the utility of a college education but not its satisfactions. For most, work still means "job" not "career" and remains the lesser of two evils, one being street life.

So, the questions of evaluation are: Did students, drawing on their training experiences, say "I can do that!" Did students see something interesting, vibrant, satisfying, and rewarding when they went to work?

Data in previous sections testifies to some significant personal triumphs: the skills acquired through training, the highpoints of the training, and the self-observed changes (pages 10 and 11). It would be unrealistic to posit changes in study habits or career goals as outgrowths of the 6-8 week program. Moreover, there have been intensive enrichment programs that have so satisfied students' interest as to nip it in the bud. Might these students suffer a delayed reaction to this summer program and be turned off ultimately to corporate careers?? On that note of caution, we review some of the students' perceptions of careers.

Careers were not explored in any broad sense in this summer experience. This summer focused mainly on corporate settings. But a by-product was to be increased interest in career opportunities and identification with successful employees thereby strengthening the student's motivation to work in school and go to college. "Did your career goals change this summer?" the students were asked. No student said yes. One was unsure. Students still dream of owning their own businesses, pursuing law, medicine, social work and entertainment. Most responses were similar to the one quoted below.

> No, this summer has not lead me to change my goals. (legal, health care, accounting, computer, fashion) This summer has strengthen my goals, to work harder and consentrate!

TABLE 8: STUDENTS' RESPONSES RELATED TO ATTITUDES

Students were asked to complete these sentences:

People in the work world seem to take pleasure or pride in ...

- their work (5 people)
- making the job a success and finishing it
- reaching a higher position
- succeeding and doing things right with notice from their supervisors
- themselves
- accomplishing something

The most difficult part of peoples' lives at work seems to be ...

- their working habits such as getting along with other people (majority of responses)

Besides money, the thing about work that would help me keep wanting to succeed is ...

- keeping myself occupied
- interest
- being on a board of directors
- helping others (3)
- making my family proud
- the fact I knew I earned it honestly
- vacation
- fringe benefits
- the competition
- experience
- a more successful life as an adult
- to keep myself out of trouble
- learning more and more about the business
- getting a promotion (2)

In terms of attitudes, then, the data are inconclusive as to whether or how many students experienced a paradigm shift to view work as something other than an extension of school-- something possibly more vital, creative, collaborative, or autonomous.

SUMMARY

Students' perceived gains were intellectual and verbal. They acquired vocabulary and criteria for interviewing and strategies for relating to new situations. Their achievements were of two kinds: (1) fairly situation-specific techniques for inquiry and group problem-solving; and (2) transferrable learnings insofar as they feel more empowered and confident in public speaking. Were there no other indicators of growth or change, these alone would be enough to conclude that the training elements are appropriate for this target group encountering institutional settings and job responsibilities for the first time. There were other gains such as working collectively and learning from others. Students' career orientations seem little changed. But it should be kept in mind that they were exposed mainly to corporate settings about which they had minimal knowledge or interest at the outset. In sum, the design and training activities contributed substantially to the overall objective of introducing students to the world of work.

IV. CONCLUSIONS AND CONCERNS

There are four common emphases in work education programs: (1) helping students make "career choices;" (2) helping students develop the ability to get and keep a job; (3) providing students with a non-school environment and set of challenges in the hope that these will be beneficial to the maturation process; and (4) providing students with the opportunity to develop and learn new technical skills. The Coro training especially emphasizes the third, providing students with a non-school environment and set of challenges. [13]

A school business class or internship may also provide some of these learnings but there are no guarantees, especially with the latter. Experiential training and education are the only reliable approaches for skill-building, challenge and self-discovery which-- according to students' self-assessments, reported learnings and test scores-- composed their "learned" curriculum.

- ☐ Students acquired frameworks for analyzing businesses and applied them to their own investigations and interpretations of work-related situations. They drew on concepts, vocabulary and adults' personal accounts as provided in the training.

- ☐ Students exhibited increases in their abilities to participate, cognitively and interpersonally, when faced with the challenges and practices that define a working life, e.g. communicating, asking questions for information and help, and making decisions. Students reported increased self-confidence related to these new skills.

- ☐ A number of students took learnings about keeping a job, in particular, social relations at work: showing respect for others to get respect, pitching in, looking busy.

- ☐ A few students cherished their technical learnings: faxxing, filing, coding mail.

- ☐ There were incidental learnings of surprising variety: learning an office norm about putting "rude" customers on indefinite hold as punishment, coping with the darkness and vastness of the rural retreat center, pooling experiences about a shopping in downtown stores as a minority youth, studying the clothing and mannerisms of adult guests, discovering a definition of Affirmative Action that to took issues with the sponsor's. The least of students' learnings was about making career choices which is not surprising based on the written curriculum.

- ☐ As individuals, many students had opportunities to know that what one thinks and feels is desirable and possible when soliciting help or information, or in presenting or asserting oneself as a student or investigator. Through these Coro experiences-- which emphasized encounters with people and events in new situations-- the process of of identity formation was aided.

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13 Simon et. al., Learning Work, pp. 99, 153.

How students make sense of experience depends to some extent on the values, beliefs, ideas and strengths they bring with them, but it also depends on the context and content of reflection and analysis provided in the training program. Based on feedback from students and trainers, a number of adjustments would make a good adaptation to youth programs even better and would add breadth and depth to the learning. These are elaborated in the following.

CONTENT OF TRAINING

Concern The Coro training was highly focused on business concepts and skills. This contributed to its effectiveness. Also of benefit were the trainers' coaching and immediate feedback as students practiced their new skills and strategies in interviewing, presentations, and group tasks. However, students became so accustomed to interviewing corporate representatives that they were thrown off by the one or two individuals who broke that mold. None of the interviewees reflected the students' stated career interests.

Recommendations A broadening of scope should be attempted in future training curriculum with new elements adapted to youth interests and made "concrete" and personally accessible.

- -- Include encounters with adults from more varied work settings and careers of interest to students: non-corporate law, health care, accounting, community organization, computers, cooking, small business, real estate, etc.
- -- Encourage the sharing of adults' personalized "work biographies," including how they made choices, overcame obstacles and solved problems.
- -- Present more non-white and female role-models among speakers.
- -- Expose students to more work settings through cross-visitations at each others' or speakers' job sites.
- -- In addition to interviews, use similar vehicles but which also suggest and promote the transferrability of inquiry to other contexts, e.g. panels, mentor breakfasts, newsletter, small group interviews organized by areas of interest, etc.
- -- Include group projects which introduce students to other Coro sectors: the contexts of government, media, community organizations, politics, etc.
- -- Expand the timeframe of training component.

Concern Although the curriculum is not too abstract in the sense of difficult or intellectual, more topics of relevance are needed. Students used new frameworks to make sense of their world but expressed some frustrations at not going further.

Recommendations Students need time during training to reflect collectively on first-hand experiences within new work settings, understanding corporate or mainstream patterns and values, and coping with internship roles, for example:

- -- exploring cultural differences, racism, prejudice, and stereotyping;
- -- sharing experiences, priorities and techniques in managing time and money. through exercises in values clarification, personal "economics," etc.
- -- reflecting on similarities and differences among work settings and distinguishing between rules, procedures, norms, rituals.
- -- acquiring skills in active listening and conflict resolution.

Concern One of the best ways to insure learning is to provide opportunities for the learner to articulate it. Writing stretches one's critical thinking ability the most. As the samples of student writing in this report indciate, students need practice with writing. Presentations and write-ups were a strength of the program, as were debriefs, despite students' discomfort with prolonged analysis. A variety of activities and verbal exercises could greatly contribute to the internalization of learning and students reflection and to trainers' ability to "take the pulse" of individuals and the group.

Recommendations

-- weekly journals and/or reflective-writing assignments to which trainers would reply in writing and would also serve a supportive counseling function.
-- composing individual portfolios to "show and tell" and save. To include organizational chart, job descriptions, relevant news clippings, items of interest, company literature, sample of intern's work, or log. (Also: scrapbook, scavenger hunt).
-- interns playing host -teacher to fellow student visitors.
-- structured brief group go-rounds (as warm-ups or closings) on an interesting question e.g. "the best and worst part of my first week of internship," "something new and good about me as an interviewer." "a person at work whom I sense I can learn from," "a hunch or suspicion." (written or oral)

IMPLEMENTATION OF TRAINING

Concern Students raised the concern about increasing the proportion of lively, fun, interactive training exercises.

Recommendations

-- Training components in smaller doses, e.g. less than whole day or half-day.
-- Incorporate more variety, physical activites and decompression time.
-- Students should have more input on agenda. Checking the agenda on a daily basis and mini-evaluations at end of sessions would facilitate more 2-way communication on topics of interest.
-- Vary the structure of "debriefs" of experiences. Use open-ended discussion sparingly. (See above suggestions.)

Concern A student's commitment to a program, as demonstrated in participation and attendance, depends on his or her sense of ownership of the goals and on involvement with others. Ideally, students would receive academic credit or a certificate which might also allow the strengthening of writing, reading and research elements.

Recommendations

-- Recruitment, selection and orientation should emphasize the special nature of the experience with explicit criteria, individual and group goal-setting and /or contracting.
-- Provide group bonding experience up-front. (New Games, outings, Outward Bound 3-hour experience)
-- Maximize adult relationships between staff and interviewees within the parameters of the training through 2-way journals, "work biographies," one-to-one, group sharing and informal time together.
-- Provide effort-based awards and ceremonies for best attendance at work and training, portfolios, special new skills learned, or difficulties faced.
-- Publish writing samples.

Concern The training occurs as a short-term immersion in new ideas and skills which students have some opportunities to apply. However, the learnings imparted in this kind of training are much more generalizable and transferrable than students may be aware of to other school and other situations.

Recommendations Students would be helpedto retain and apply new learning with:

-- Increased number of training days
-- Stretching-out of training days through the length of the internship experience program, or reconvening at strategic points: mid-point and end-of-internship feedback, sharing readings and reflections, presentations, party.
-- Interpenetration of some training activities and internship e.g. journal, sharing of feedback and follow-up between trainer and supervisor.

LINKAGES BETWEEN TRAINING AND INTERNSHIP

The ideal internship-training program is a coordinated effort. Students would be socialized to program components prior to their start-ups through recruitment, selection, orientation, preparation of placements and contracting in some form. Students would be helped to use the stages of closure and follow-up to continue learning at each segment's end. This involves commitment, ownership and coordination among different organizations, students and parents. It is not a simple process. It requires communication and negotiation of arrangements, roles or incentives. (See also pages 13-14, 16-17.)

In this program students underwent internship, training and occasional counseling as parallel experiences except in the Coro activities which elicited self-reflection and sharing among group members about work.

Educational linkages

Concern In the ideal Summer Work Training Program, students' efforts to learn their jobs and attain new skills would be recognized and reinforced across the board. Individual needs not addressed in one setting would be referred to another. Adult team effort would help adolescents whose actions hint at difficulty, who act out the feelings and role conflicts about which they have not acquired the tools to articulate. As was noted earlier, variations in attendance in the training were thought to stem in part from the mixed messages about its importance in relations to internship.

Recommendation Students need clear, unmixed messages about the importance of both training and work:

-- explicit criteria for success upon the student's entry into the program via contracts, school credit, or certificates and ceremonies;
-- compensation for work days which incorporate training days or are contingent on them, i.e. "The training is a part of the work you get paid for."
-- cooperation among adults: sponsors, contractors, trainers, supervisors, parents.
-- outreach to parents at the outset and conclusion of the program and especially for unusual or demanding aspects of training, e.g. weekend retreat.

Concern Trainers learned about students' difficulties at the work site mainly through their chance remarks. For example, one student interpreted a question about problem solving on the job by telling the group about the problems and solutions used at her customer service department. "Customers are rude!" she told the group. "I used to just slam the phone down on them but I learned from someone who's been there awhile that you should just put the customers on hold and let them stay there forever."

Trainers need to make time for more sharing about work experiences, but most helpful would be to foster dialogue between trainers and supervisors.

Recommendation Collaboration between trainers and supervisor opens a new set of of educational possibilities in helping students apply concepts to practice. Information-sharing and attendance monitoring between trainers and job supervisor would also strengthen the opportunities to promote personal growth of student.

-- The supervisor would encourage students to apply new skills, interview other employees and tour the company.
-- The trainers would help meet students' work needs and fine-tune the curriculum accordingly.
-- Easy feedback vehicles could be used at various points of the internship: forms, checklists, phone calls, and sharing of student projects: journals, logs, panel discussions, portfolios, publication of student writings.
-- Special breakfasts, recognition ceremonies, sharing of objectives and feedback would unite these complementary teacher figures.

Programmatic Linkages

Concern Strengthening the links in a multi-faceted youth program has many benefits. But management and coordination often require some negotiation of inter-organizational boundaries and philosophies. Adolescents can slip between the cracks of even the most organized programs. Anyone who takes charge of experiences for young people can expect to face with them the impediments to commitment: problems of adolescence, family situations, health emergencies. Social supports and ladders of referral are not easily patched together on a short-term or ad hoc basis.

The act of assent which adults bring to new experiences is often lacking in the young. They enter into new situations with less life experience with which to trust and commit. They sometimes play adults off against each other. They meet their needs often only with the help of adults who may need to cooperate with each other to help the young person.

Recommendations Communication and collaboration are too critical to be left to take place informally among adult constituencies. To foster a shared sense of ownership and commitment:

-- Establish formal linkages with explicit expectations and written agreements.
-- Reward students with pay, academic credit or both for successful completion of a program, based on clear knowledge of the behaviors that constitute success, failure, and consequences for missed days of training or work.
-- Anticipate the need for a support system with counseling, crisis intervention, and outreach. Draft a plan with roles assigned among adults or, if not, a chain of referral or network for addressing adolescent needs and keeping students in the program.

-- Closure in an experiential program should also serve as a bridge to the future. Plan follow-up to help students hang onto their accomplishments and to get academic remediation or enrichment or counseling as needed. Vehicles to consider: written reports and feedback shared among the adult staff and students, information sharing with school personnel or others who might help students, ceremonies, "publications" and portfolios, etc.

SUMMARY

The curriculum is effective, appropriate and responsive to the needs of the learners. Students acquired some of the language of business, learned about its structures and materials (capital, ownership, governance, constraints), mastered basic skills of interviewing of business people, acquired frameworks for viewing businesses as evolving entities, and developed some perspectives of workplace norms and events, e.g. what is hard work, what is a tough decision, what is a risk in the start-up of a business, what is collegial responsibility. For the 14-16 year-old whose points of reference have been confined to the supermarket, sales clerk, bodega, and pizza parlor, these learnings are a huge leap in conceptualization and feeling at home in a larger world.

The scope and sequence of the Coro curriculum were satisfactory with the few concerns mentioned in examples above. None of the comments elicited in this assessment suggests a need for rearranging the flow of activities, but fine tuning is needed in the timing and variation of activities to suit the attentions of this younger, less analytical age. Expansion of training should be considered; a number of students asked about its continuation.

Not only the content but also the context of the training should be a key consideration in future programs. Training and work-site experience can and should be mutually reinforcing. Communication among the various constituencies-- sponsors, trainers, supervisors, parents, schools and the community -- can insure unified adult messages to students and add much to the program's intensity and relevance. Student commitment and learning can be greatly enhanced by attention to personal relationships and "boundary issues:" recruitment, selection and entry into the program and, afterwards, in follow-up. These are concerns that future programs should address through formal agreements on aims, roles and criteria for internship and training.